SUBJECTS.

73. The Government may be pleased to consider the desirability of publicly declaring the principle that the rights and privileges of a citizen shall in no way suffer because of his religious faith or creed; and to practically apply that principle to the Christian community in the State and thus remove their present disabilities as regards the use of public satroms, &c.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

Mr. W. J. Chacko, B. A., L. T. (Member, Nominated) dealt with his subject under the following heads.

(1) *Inadequate representation of the Christians in the Popular Assembly.* The Member said that the Christians form more than one-fourth of the population of the State. But the paucity of Christian Members in the Assembly elected from the taluks, was very significant. In the present Assembly, there were only 8 elected Members, out of a total of 18 Christians including 3 Europeans. He urged the necessity of making permanent arrangements for the due representation of the community in proportion to their strength and importance in the State. He suggested that this might be done (*a*) by placing the several associations on the permanent list of electorates and (*b*) by making the necessary modifications in the rules and by-laws of election, so as to assure the election of a Christian Member in those taluks where Christians were largely found.

Dewan.—Nomination by Government is comparatively easy. I hardly think there is any more workable arrangement for the present.

(2) *The Christian Succession Bill and the Legislative Council.*

It was desirable to have a proportionate representation of the community in the Legislative Council, and it was all the more necessary especially at a time when the Christian Succession Bill had to be taken up in the Council. As matters stood at present, there was not the remotest chance of Christians being elected to the Council. The Member then submitted the desire of the Christian Members of the Assembly to wait on the Dewan with a deputation with regard to the selection of Christian Members to the Legislative Council.

The Dewan consented to the same.

The Member referred also to the Christian Commission and said that the proposed legislation for the Christians should be suited to the present progressive state of the community, and be applicable to all denominations of Christians.

Dewan:—Do you think that, if we proceed upon the existing system, we shall be able to devise one law for all the Christians?

The Member replied that the desire of all the Christians was that one law would do.

(3) *Privileges and rights of the Christians.*

The Member while speaking in grateful terms of the social equality, religious toleration and the other privileges granted to

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

SUBJECTS.

them, which enabled the community to render distinguished service to the State, especially in the direction of educational work, the upliftment of the depressed classes and the creation of a unifying force among the different sections of the people, referred to the meagre representation of the community in the Public Services of the State. He said that, in the higher grades of appointments, they held about one-eighth, and in the subordnate grades only one twenty-fourth of the total number. The Member urged the desirability of entertaining more Christians in the different departments and suggested an enquiry on the subject.

(4) *Disabilities of the Christians.*

(*a*) Exclusion from the Revenue Department.

The Member said that the community had been feeling the injustice of, and suffering under, this disability sufficiently long and he suggested that no substantial redress of their grievance in this respect would be possible till the Devaswom Department was completely separated from the other branches of the Administration.

(*b*) Material disabilities of the Christian converts.

The Christian converts were unjustly deprived of their share of their ancestral properties. This was a grievance which would be felt more and more in the future. In British India, Ceylon and Japan, the Government have generously and freely accepted the principle of religious neutrality and put it into practice. The Member prayed for the protection of the rights of a free citizen in this direction.

(*c*) Exclusion from the public satroms.

It was hard that the Christians were excluded from the public satroms established and maintained by the State, out of public funds, in different parts of the country, for the accommodation of travellers. The Member proposed that the difficulties raised on the score of diet might be removed if separate kitchens were provided. In conclusion, the Member advocated that the principle adopted by the Paramount Power in the matter of removing the various disabilities of the different classes of people, should be followed here also.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

74. The desirability o publishing the circuiting programme of the heads of Departments and other officers so as to enable people to meet them.

Mr. C. Mathan Mappillai (Member, Meenachil taluk) said that the heads of departments and other circuiting officers did not intimate to the people their programme and consequently the people were not in a position to meet them and represent their requirements and grievances. It would be useful, the Member added, if the programme of circuits of the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly